TO THE

KINGS moſt Excellent MAJESTY,

AND

High Court of PARLIAMENT, the Lords and Commons Aſſembled.

The Petition of the Free Workmen-Printers in and about the City of *London.*

Humbly ſheweth,

THat whereas your Petitioners have found, by Experience, that the Proſecution at Law of ſuch as are Foreiners and Intruders into the Myſtery of PRINTING, hath not only been very Tedeous, by reaſon of their ſhifting and flying from one Court to another, but alſo exceeding Troubleſome and Expenſive; and doth really cauſe the Loſs of more Time, and the Diſburſement of more Moneys, than your Petitioners are any wayes able to afford. And likewiſe we are Diſcountenanced by our Company; for, when we have made our Aggrievances known unto them, we have had no Redreſs; but they have rather Encouraged thoſe Perſons, in going themſelves to put them into Printing-Houſes to Work; which has much Emboldened others of that kind; this being a great Oppreſſion and Scandal to our ART: For the moſt of them are men of bad Converſations, bearing ill Principles to the Government, and ſo Illiterate that they cannot Read what they do: which is the main Cauſe of ſo many bad things being Printed. But to this perhaps the Company may Object, and ſay, That there is not Free-men enough to do the Work of the Kingdome: which to the contrary is ſeen to the World, That half the Work that is Printed now a dayes, is Diſputes, Pamphlets, and Libels, and Unlicenſed Work. We therefore do moſt Humbly beſeech Your MAJESTY, and the Moſt Honourable and High Court of PARLIAMENT, That for our Relief herein, (and the Good and Peace of the Nation alſo) the late Act made for Printing may be reviewed, and theſe following Clauſes added thereto; which, if Granted to us, we do humbly Affirm to Your MAJESTY, and the High Court of PARLIAMENT, That it will be the only proper Remedy to prevent the Printing of ſuch Scandalous and Treaſonable Libels, as do very often creep abroad.

I. *THat no Maſter Printer ſhall dare to Imploy or ſet to Work any Foreiner, either at Preſs or Caſe, upon the Penalty of Forfeiting Five Pounds for every Month, to be paid down immediately upon a Conviction before a Juſtice of Peace, by the Oaths of two Freemen-Printers; or elſe to be preſently ſent to Goal, until ſuch Money ſhall be Paid. One half to the King, and the other half to the Proſecutors.*

II. *That no Maſter Printer ſhall dare to keep any more Apprentices or Boyes in his Houſe, than ſuch a number as are limited by this Act to each particular Man, under the Penalty of Forfeiting Forty Pounds for every ſuch Apprentice or Boy, to be Recovered immediately, (as aforeſaid) and ſuch Apprentice or Boy to be forthwith turned away. And that where any are in Co-partnerſhrip, they ſhall be accounted but as one man, and not dare to keep any more Apprentices or Boyes than if they were but one man, under the ſame Penalty aforeſaid.*

III. *And now (to evidence our Loyalty and Obedience to the King and his Laws) we do voluntarily offer our ſelves, and do pray that it may be enacted, That whatſoever Free Workman ſhall be found to have Compoſed, or wrought off at Preſs, any Scandalous, Seditious, or Treaſonable Book, or Pamphlet, That ſuch Workman ſhall be deemed equally guilty as the Author himſelf; and ſhall undergo the ſame Pains and Penalties, as are due to the Author according to Law.*

And your Petitioners ſhall ever Pray, &c.